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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [ECON](#) [PARM](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: SALEH COOPERATIVE ON CT, LOOKS FOR ECONOMIC REWARDS

REF: SANAA 2451

Classified By: DCM Nabeel Khoury for reasons 1.4 b and d.

1. (S) Summary: Ambassador met President Saleh September 4 in preparation for APHAS/CT Townsend's September 6 visit to Yemen, and Saleh's November trip to Washington. Ambassador said the highest priorities for discussion include CT and security cooperation, economic reform and development, and democracy. Saleh replied that Yemen was committed to being a full partner with the U.S. on CT, but pointed to delays in the delivery of U.S. military aid as a source of friction. Ambassador and Saleh agreed on the need for a long-term strategy for military assistance and a more structured approach to intel sharing and CT cooperation. Saleh quickly turned the discussion to economic aid, saying the ROYG will provide a list of development projects for U.S. support. Saleh also suggested there would be an imminent cabinet reshuffle, and protested the conviction of Moayad in the U.S. End summary.

2. (S) Ambassador met September 4 with President Saleh, accompanied by DCM, DATT, OMC, and POL/E. Also present were Minister of Foreign Affairs Qirbi and Yemeni Ambassador to the U.S. al-Hajjri. Ambassador outlined the three major themes for Saleh's November visit to Washington: counterterrorism and security cooperation; economic reform and development; and deepening democratic institutions. Ambassador said that U.S. views on CT cooperation were conveyed in the CT scorecard, provided to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior. APHAS/CT Townsend's September 6 visit to Yemen will focus on these issues, said Ambassador, and we are looking to hear your thoughts on what Yemen expects from the relationship.

CT Cooperation: "We've Achieved All We've Been Asked"

3. (S) "Like it or not," said Saleh, "We're partners with the U.S. in fighting terrorism." Saleh then declared that Yemen has already achieved all that it has been asked to do, with positive results. Any CT discussion, continued Saleh, is just a confirmation of what is already happening.

4. (S) Saleh hit a different note, however, when discussing delays in the delivery of U.S. military assistance, specifically referring to F5s and C130s. "How can we be a partner in CT," he inquired, "if you don't give us the equipment we ask for?" Saleh asked for a more strategic relationship, both on military and economic development, rather than working on piecemeal projects. He then asked that the U.S. inform him how much money it will allocate for security in Yemen, so the ROYG can figure out how to spend it.

5. (S) Ambassador agreed on the need for a strategic partnership, and said that the November visit should help determine the next step in the relationship between the two countries. We want to develop a strong relationship, said Ambassador, with routine sharing of intel and security information. In terms of military assistance, said Ambassador, the U.S. needs detailed information on Yemen's long-term strategic plans, and can then allocate resources to meet those needs. He pointed to the Yemen Coast Guard and Central Security Forces as examples of how the U.S. can provide equipment and training once a strategy is in place. Saleh agreed to provide such information, and promised to supervise this process personally in advance of the visit to Washington.

6. (S) On small arms and light weapons, Ambassador repeated Saleh's request to bring him any information obtained on illegal sales. Ambassador said we have such information and Saleh agreed to a separate meeting to examine the evidence. The President urged Ambassador to focus on bigger issues, however, saying: "Kalashnikovs are not the real threat. We need to remove landmines, explosives and heavy weaponry from the local market."

Saleh Makes His Fundraising Pitch...

7. (S) The President quickly diverted the conversation to the subject of economic development. The U.S. talks about helping with development and corruption, said Saleh, but the

key to solving all these problems is reducing unemployment. Saleh said the ROYG was composing a list of development projects, one of which was completion of the Saila road/canal in downtown Sanaa, for which he sought support from the U.S. before the November visit. The President explained that he was looking for accomplishments from the visit, and wanted to "silence critics" who suggest that it is only a photo opportunity.

...Promises New Faces in ROYG

18. (S) The President expressed frustration with his own government, specifically the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Ahmad Sofan, regarding development priorities. He quipped that Sofan thinks he has a "government within the Government," and promised a change in the Cabinet shortly. "Soon the old faces will disappear," said Saleh. (Note: Saleh's critique of MOPIC's programs referred specifically to the use of development assistance funds from the Department of Agriculture. End note).

Moayad: "Not a Real Catch"

19. (S) As the meeting ended, Saleh added his thoughts on the arrest and conviction of Sheikh Moayad in the U.S. (reftel) The U.S. created a big problem without any real evidence, said Saleh. He downplayed support for Hamas, saying that Moayad was insignificant and not much of a catch. The President suggested that Moayad should be released, and contended that if he were really dangerous "we'd catch him ourselves." When pressed on the issue of Hamas, Saleh said Yemen had ceased its support, as there was no need for resistance in light of the ongoing peace process. Ambassador suggested that the President make his position public.

Cashing in on CT Cooperation

110. (S) Comment: Despite broad agreement on continued CT and military cooperation, we need to get Saleh focused on the details of SA/LW and military aid. The upcoming visit from APHAS/CT offers a good opportunity to advance a long-term strategic plan for future cooperation. Saleh will advance the position that Yemen is doing its part in the War on Terror and therefore deserves broad economic support in return. Saleh cited Yemen's previous relationship with the USSR in suggesting a broad MOU be signed between the two countries when he goes to Washington in November. We also need to stress to Saleh that corruption in Yemen is pervasive and affects all sectors, including security. Specifically, putting the arms dealers out of business is essential to the GWOT. More broadly, he has to launch a full-scale war on corruption and he can rely on our help in this regard, starting with the MCC program which is due to be approved for Yemen in the next two months. End comment.
Krajeski